



NJDOE News

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State Board of Education Honors Recipients of Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The State Board of Education today recognized six teachers for their outstanding accomplishments and service in the classroom as part of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching program.

The six teachers are:

Nancy Ciandella, a math teacher at Gloucester County Institute of Technology, Gloucester County;

Tina Held, a science teacher at the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, Ocean County Vocational-Technical Schools;

Ellen LeBlanc, a math teacher at High Technology High School, Monmouth County Vocational-Technical Schools;

Luisa Marcos, a science teacher at Union Hill High School, Union City Public Schools, Hudson County;

Marilyn Steneken, a science teacher at Sparta Township Middle School, Sparta Township Schools, Sussex County; and

Linda Wisneski, a math teacher at Morris Hills High School, Morris Hills Public Schools, Morris County.

"These talented professionals are models of excellence in their subject areas," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera, who introduced the six recipients to the state board. "They have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to teaching and inspiring their students to learn and succeed, while at the same time winning the respect of their colleagues."

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is the nation's highest honor for teachers of mathematics and science in grades K-12. It recognizes grades K-6 and 7-12 teachers in alternate years. Each national award consists of a \$10,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to the recipient, to be spent at the teacher's direction. The award also includes expense-paid activities in Washington, D.C., where the award winners receive certificates signed by the President.

Teachers are selected for the program based on their teaching performance, background and experience, and their participation in activities both in and out of school that relate to their roles as teachers. Applicants must demonstrate how their teaching enables students to better learn concepts in mathematics and science.

Statewide panels of science and mathematics educators review classroom videos and professional development activities in selecting the state finalists. National panels later select presidential awardees from among the state finalists.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is one of many education initiatives supported by the Department of Education and Gov. James E. McGreevey to strengthen teacher quality and quantity. Teacher reform initiatives include:

- Raising the minimum passing score required for New Jersey teachers on the national PRAXIS exam.
- Raising the minimum college grade point average required for teacher candidates.
- Requiring teachers to demonstrate core competency in their specific subject areas.
- Establishing uniform standards for teachers.
- Offering financial incentives for teachers seeking national certification, and encouraging the business community to fund mentoring support for candidates for national teacher certification.

For more information about these initiatives and Gov. McGreevey's 21-point plan for education reform, visit the

DOE's Web site: www.state.nj.us/education.

The National Science Foundation began the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching program in 1983 by inviting each state to nominate teachers in the two fields for consideration. Teachers must have taught science and mathematics for at least five years. Nominations are made by students, parents, administrators, teachers and others.

The program is administered in New Jersey by the DOE's Office of Innovative Programs and Schools.